Corps Facts

Environmental Stewardship Business Process

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District

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It is U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' policy to apply principles of good environmental stewardship to the natural and cultural resources occurring on Corps' administered and/or managed lands and waters. In the St. Paul District, the Natural Resource Project Office in La Crescent, Minn., manages these public resources on approximately 220,904 acres of land and water within the Upper Mississippi River 9-Foot Navigation Channel Project from Minneapolis to Guttenberg, Iowa; and 780 acres of land and water at Eau Galle Lake in Spring Valley, Wis. Key products and services include:

- ***Restoration of Habitats***
- ***Projects to Maintain and Increase Levels of Benthic, Terrestrial and Avian Populations***
- ***Operation of Public Lands***
- ***Management of the Volunteer Program***

These stewardship responsibilities are carried out through a wide variety of natural resource management activities. All of this work is implemented in conjunction with other federal, state and local agencies having fish and wildlife management responsibilities and with assistance from technical and administrative staff at the Corps' downtown St. Paul office.

Forest Management

Natural resource inventories have been conducted on more than 22,000 acres of bottomland forest. Management prescriptions are developed to improve and sustain the resource as habitat for wildlife. These prescriptions include reforestation, timber stand improvement, timber harvest and monitoring or treatment for forest insect and disease.

Revegetation Projects

Dredged material placement sites are locations along the main channel of the Mississippi River where sand from channel maintenance dredging operations are placed. Over the years, the Corps has significantly reduced the number of placement sites and currently strives to maximize beneficial use of the material for other purposes. Many historic placement sites are no longer used for channel maintenance work. These non-active sites are often sparsely vegetated and have little value for wildlife. Establishing vegetation at these sites is designed to improve habitat by enhancing soils and restoring trees, shrubs, grasses and/or forbs.

Shoreline Stabilization

The Mississippi River floodplain contains a wealth of cultural resources and nationally significant habitats for fish and wildlife. Corps' staff undertakes protection of these resources in areas where they are threatened by erosion. Various rock riprap and bioengineering designs are used.

Public Use Regulation

Public use activities on Corps' lands and waters, such as operation of vessels, removal or alteration of vegetative growth and other features, commercial activities and shoreline structures are regulated to protect and enhance the natural and cultural resources.

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Grassland Management

Native grasslands and prairies are protected and developed where possible on Corps' lands to provide diverse habitats for nesting waterfowl, songbirds, turtles and other wildlife.

Fisheries Management

Projects are designed and implemented to manage water flow, improve water quality and protect and restore fish, mussels and their habitats. Recent activities include a relocation plan for the endangered Higgins' eye pearly mussel on the Mississippi River and a trout habitat improvement project on the Eau Galle River.

Wetland Management

Wetlands on Corps' land are protected, conserved and maintained with the goal being "no net loss" of wetlands at any one water resource project area. In some cases, new wetlands may be developed or degraded wetlands may be enhanced in support of mitigation plans or national programs, such as the Endangered Species Act or the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

Pesticide Program

Pesticide use is managed to provide control of vegetation on critical engineering structures, to reduce habitat degradation caused by exotic and invasive species and to promote regeneration of forest species.

Water Level Management

Water level management is a tool for restoring river habitat. River levels in selected backwater lakes or entire Mississippi River navigation pools have been successfully drawn down during the summer growing season to promote germination and growth of aquatic plants and improve fish and wildlife habitat. More "drawdowns" are being planned for the future in coordination with the public, commercial navigation and recreational boating interests. Corps' natural resource personnel are active participants in interagency planning and implementation of these projects.

For more information, please contact

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